From: Argus BarGrille
To: Blake-Horst, Meghan
Subject: VOC Mtg
Date: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 6:01:58 PM

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My name is Gwen Cassis, my husband, Rick Brahmer and I have owned the Argus Bar Grille on the Capital square since 2007. We also previously owned Amy's Cafe/mezze on Gilman just off State Street. My husband was also a member of the bid board at one time.

First of all, I would like to thank all those involved for the quick implementation of the Streatery program 2 years ago . It was a lifesaver for the restaurants and bars. And I would also like to thank those involved for all the hard work in crafting the Roadway Cafe plan. (Though I must admit, I do not like the name "roadway" as much as "Streatery.")

I have reviewed the proposed ordinance changes and would like to submit for the record some comments. I realize that some of the issues I will be raising have to do with other ordinances, but as they are mentioned in this document I will address them.

I would also like to preface my comments with the fact that the pandemic is not over. We began last summer without masks and within months Delta and omicron hit. The restaurants and bars of this city are still struggling. Summertime sidewalk Cafe's are our lifeblood now. What we do in the summer months is what gets us through the winter, hopefully. With no end in sight to more variations, our businesses may be relying on summertime patio revenue for years to come.

(5)(c) umbrellas may not contain any signage. Umbrellas are very important part of the sidewalk Cafe esthetics as well as protection from direct sun and light rain. Solid, strong umbrellas are pricey and typically last one season. Liquor and beer companies have long provided umbrellas at no cost, or at a small cost, to the restaurant and bars. I have not seen any that are not tastefully designed. As far as the argument of advertising in eye view, most restaurants and bars contain some sort of advertisement from coasters, table tents, Pepsi cups, tshirts on staff, placards, tins etc. This restriction is a needless financial burden placed on operators. I am not aware of any cafes who did not utilize the distributor umbrellas these past 2 years and I am not aware of any complaints from the general public over the relaxed restrictions. In fact, I have only heard compliments on how nice the sidewalk cafes and streateries looked.

(5)(j) tents: I am so happy to see tents finally allowed; they save us when it is raining. I have not seen a tent with signage on the square, but why no signage on tents? My argument being the same as for the umbrellas.
Second, no smoking under tents: why? The tents do not have sides, are not enclosed, have

a lot of clearance. I'm not sure the difference between a tent and an umbrella. Some establishments allow for smoking on patios and this is a large part of their customer base. As well, we are now placing an extra burden on establishments to have a host/staff to seat according to whether or not the customer intends to smoke. Do we have our staff ask: how many in your party and do you intend to smoke? Do they have to ask a customer to move if they all of a sudden start smoking?

(6) (a) why are we changing the pedestrian sidewalk from 6ft to 7 ft? 6 ft has worked all these years. I realize there is a clause protecting past cafes, but what about new cafes? What about change of ownership, does that constitute a new patio? What if a business cannot afford their entire "pre-2022" patio one year and then the next year they can, but now cannot under the ordinance change. How do we entice new businesses to set up shop if they cannot have a patio? I'm just not sure what is the point of changing this by a foot except for placing undo restrictions on existing establishments and barriers on potential new establishments /ownership/developments and their ability to have a sidewalk Cafe. This, coupled with the 2 ft from curb, will not leave much opportunity for much, if any cafe. Frankly, I don't know of any existing cafes that are 2 ft off the curb.

(9)(a) (1)remove everything from cafes at the end of night?
Moving chairs, tables, barriers, garbage cans umbrellas etc is a strenuous, time-consuming job. Some patios can take over an hour to set up. At this time, and probably for at least a few yeara into the future, staffing is a real concern at bars and restaurants. Many places have shortened their hours due to lack of staff. Having to haul heavy tables, chairs, sandbags barriers in the dead of heat, all are taxing on an already taxed staff. Also, stacked equipment inside makes cleaning very difficult and always has.
As well, moving all these things inside and out puts wear and tear not only on the furniture but the building and the restaurant. Replacement, repair etc, is an added expense to a struggling restaurant as well as extra stuff in our landfill when thrown out prematurely.
Mall maintenance is not doing every street every day. I am sure if given notice which day mall maintenance would be at at which terrace, we could make sure that day to either remove, or put in a cluster at the end of the block, or even be responsible for our own clean up.
In this document there is already provisions for maintaining your terrace if mall maintenance is in any way hindered from doing it. I believe there are even fines in place. Also, why is it okay to stack these things in the roadway but not the terrace? I believe streets are swept as well.
Why does mall concourse have to do this but no one else in the city?
Also, 30 minutes after closing may not necessarily be enough time to break down and haul inside a patio. Again, some patios take longer than 30 minutes. Staffing issues etc

Does (10)(1)state that sidewalk cafes having permanent facilities in the sidewalk or terrace area have to do snow removal?

(3) (g) (5). My last comment has to do with hours of operation/ alcohol sales. At this time alcohol needs to be off the patio an hour to an hour and a half before closing. 2 things can happen at 1am. The first, which is what has happened the last 2 summers,no one wanted to be inside, so they went home. costing an extra hour of revenue. The second is that everyone crams inside for the last hour, which no one wants when new strains are present. I am /proposing a temporary change in time that alcohol must be off the patio. Maybe 130? Maybe 2 on weekends? Maybe only Fri Saturday? The extra hour of outdoor table service can be more needed revenue. Especially for those of us who no longer have day time business. Personally, we used to open everyday for lunch. But with State and capital workers working from home, we don't open until 5. Most of these workers will continue to work from home for the near future. Late night hours is sometimes the best and only hours for some of us to make money.

Again thank you for all your hard work , and I thank you for your time.

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Gwen Cassis
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